

IN THE HIGH COURT OF GUJARAT AT AHMEDABAD

SPECIAL CIVIL APPLICATION No 6292 of 1999

For Approval and Signature:

Hon'ble MR.JUSTICE A.L.DAVE

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1. Whether Reporters of Local Papers may be allowed : NO
to see the judgements?
 2. To be referred to the Reporter or not? : NO
 3. Whether Their Lordships wish to see the fair copy : NO
of the judgement?
 4. Whether this case involves a substantial question : NO
of law as to the interpretation of the Constitution
of India, 1950 of any Order made thereunder?
 5. Whether it is to be circulated to the Civil Judge? : NO

USMANBHAI RAJABBHAI SHAIKH

Versus

COMMISSIONER OF POLICE

Appearance:

MS KRISHNA U MISHRA for Petitioner

MR HH PATEL AGP for Respondent No. 1, 2, 3

CORAM : MR.JUSTICE A.L.DAVE

Date of decision: 21/12/1999

ORAL JUDGEMENT

1. The Commissioner of Police, Ahmedabad City, Ahmedabad passed an order of detention in respect of the petitioner in exercise of powers under Section 3(1) of the Gujarat Prevention of Antisocial Activities Act (for

short PASA Act).

2. In the grounds of detention the detaining authority took into consideration the six offences registered against the detenu under the Bombay Prohibition Act. The authority also took into consideration the statements of two anonymous witnesses and exercised powers under Section 9(2) of the PASA Act by claiming privilege of not disclosing the identity of these witnesses. The authority after considering the less drastic alternative remedies available to it came to the conclusion that detention under PASA Act is the only option available is to immediately prevent the petitioner from pursuing his illegal and antisocial activities under the PASA Act.

3. The petitioner challenges the detention on the ground that the statements of anonymous witnesses were verified on 23.3.99 and the order was passed also on the same day. Therefore there was no time lag for arriving at a genuine subjective satisfaction for the need for exercise of such powers. In this connection, the decision in the case of Kalidas C. Kahar v. State of Gujarat 1993(2) GLR 1659 has been relied upon.

4. Mr. HH Patel, learned AGP has opposed this petition. He submitted that the quickness on the part of the Detaining Authority may not be taken as non application of mind.

5. An attempt is made by the Detaining Authority by filing an affidavit in reply to explain how the order is passed. But barring a statement to the effect that after taking into consideration the material before it and scrutinising the same the order was passed. There is nothing to indicate as to when the proposal was made by the sponsoring authority, when it was received by the Detaining Authority, when the statements were verified, when other material was verified and when the grounds of detention were prepared is not coming forth in the affidavit in reply.

5.1 The Detaining Authority has exercised the powers under Section 9(2) of the PASA Act and thereby has claimed privilege of not disclosing the identity of the witnesses. These powers are exercised by recording a subjective satisfaction that the statements made by these witnesses and the fear expressed by them qua the petitioner is found to be correct.

6. While exercising the powers under Section 9(2) of

the PASA Act, the Detaining Authority has also to keep in mind that exercise of powers under Section 9(2) of the PASA Act would deprive the detenu of his right of making an effective representation. He has therefore to consider as to what is to be given preference. Public interest and then exercise of powers under Section 9(2) of the PASA Act and the right of the detenu in exercise of powers under Section 9(2). Each case has to be judged on its own merits and the Detaining Authority has to strike a balance between the interest of the detenu on one hand and the public interest on the other.

7. For arriving at a subjective satisfaction the authority has to consider the truthfulness and genuineness of the fear expressed by the witnesses. The authority has also to take into consideration the material placed before it for exercising the powers both under Section 9(2) as well under Section 3(1) of the PASA Act. This entire exercise would require time. As it is seen in the instant case, the whole exercise was undertaken at one go in a single day, i.e. 25-3-1999.

8. In view of the decision in the case of Kalidas C. Kahar (supra), there was no time lag between the verification of the statements and the orders passed which could have possibilised for the Detaining Authority to undertake this exercise.

9. The petition is therefore deserves to be allowed and same is hereby allowed. Order passed by Commissioner of Police, Ahmedabad City, Ahmedabad on 25-3-1999 detaining Usmanbhai Rajabbhai Shaikh under provisions of PASA Act is quashed and set aside. The petitioner detenu be set at liberty forthwith if not required in any other case. Rule is made absolute. No costs.

(A.L. Dave, J)